
Building Cooperation between Theological Libraries

This is a collection of contributions on the topic of Co-operation presented at the recent Canberra Conference by:

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forward to meeting many new and old friends next time. *Trish*

Cooperation : I

There are some key aspects of the topic of library co-operation among theological libraries.

Communication

Chapter meetings and annual conferences provide significant opportunities for discussion and mutual support. The ANZTLA Newsletter presents conference papers regularly in addition to other material. In recent years the introduction of electronic mail and discussion groups such as the ANZTLA-Forum has been beneficial.

Commitment

Commitment is a prerequisite for effective co-operation. This involves individual library staff, libraries and institutional support.

Collaboration

Theological libraries have been involved in collaborative projects, large and small, between libraries and through the Association. These include staff collaborations, which draw on the skills and

knowledge base of experienced theological librarians.

Collection Development has been a significant area of collaboration as budgets are limited and rationalisation of collections has occurred. Major collaborative activities have resulted in publication of joint policy documents from several consortia.

ANZTLA member libraries using the Union Theological Classification undertake regular revision of the scheme. This annual conference workshop is important for each librarian involved.

Within metropolitan areas, theological libraries have developed a variety of reciprocal borrowing arrangements which benefit users of all participating institutions.

Recently ANZTLA member libraries have been involved in developing consortial arrangements for provision of electronic Information services. Expansion of these arrangements is currently under consideration, particularly for electronic access to ATLA Religion Database.

Formal co-operative agreements have been developed among some member libraries. These arrangements bring benefits for library users and can be cost-effective for member libraries.

ANZTLA has a long history of support for theological libraries within Asia and the Pacific, including staff training, collection development and maintenance. This is another area which will require ongoing commitment from ANZTLA libraries and librarians.

Successful library co-operation depends on the commitment of institutions, not just libraries.

Celebration

Pastor Trevor Zweck has documented the story of ANZTLA's formation and initial

development. Is there a successor to continue this important role?

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ANZTLA is a diverse organization, and every library has something to contribute to the Association.

The Association can be proud of its achievements, which include publication of Australasian Religion Index, Australasian Union List Of Theological Serials, ANZTLA Standards, ANZTLA Newsletter, monographs, festschrift and development of the ANZTLA Website.

Disadvantages

Library co-operation can take the librarian's time and energy and there is a risk of a negative impact on key library users from within the home institution.

The librarian needs to balance the needs of the individual library and the requirements of the consortia. Problems can arise when the institution does not support arrangements between their library and other institutions.

Benefits

There are positive outcomes for librarians, including professional development and improved networking when effective collaborations occur among theological libraries.

Library users gain through library co-operation with improved access to a wider range of resources.

Through working co-operatively, theological librarians can develop greater trust - people trust people, not institutions.

ANZTLA is a group with an inclusive perspective, welcoming all who join this organisation.

Co-operation beyond theological libraries

The potential for co-operative ventures extends beyond this Association. There are member libraries who work closely with denominational archival agencies. Collaboration between theological and academic libraries takes place in various forms.

Theological libraries make an important contribution to the wider library community and are more accessible through web catalogues and web-based listings such as the Australian Libraries Gateway.

Conclusion

Consider the contribution you could make to the Association. Don't wait for someone else to volunteer, get involved in your chapter of the Association.

Reference

A useful discussion of this topic can be found in the chapter by Barbara Frame:

Frame, Barbara 1995 'Developing our collections co-operatively: some practical considerations' in *So great a cloud of witnesses: libraries and theologies*; festschrift in honour of Lawrence D McIntosh, edited by P Harvey and L Pryor, Uniting Church Theological Hall and Australian and New Zealand Theological Library As-

***Th' first thing to have in a library is a shelf.
Fr'm time to time this can be decorated with
lithrature. But th' shelf is th' main thing.***

"Books". Mr Dooley Says.

Finley Peter Dunn (1867-1936)

Co-operation: II

When we talk about cooperation between theological libraries in Australia and New Zealand, it is very important to be realistic in terms of what we are able to do and achieve. There are a number of factors that limit us.

A very wise person was once heard to say about our association "We are not ATLA" (*the American Theological Library Association*) - we have neither their full-time salaried staff nor their budget.

Diversity = limitations

We are, to some extent limited by the diversity of our libraries: location, collection size, staff numbers, levels of funding, focus (education, archival, community, or a combination of these), denominational.

And yet we are able to produce **AULOTS** (*Australasian Union List of Serials in Theological Collections*) involving 96 libraries, over 5200 titles and over 17500 holdings statements.

Similarly, we have produced 12 volumes of **ARI** (*Australasian Religion Index*) - an enterprise involving the cooperative effort of indexers, editors and external partners to produce, publish and distribute the index.

Considering these two more visible outcomes of cooperation between theological libraries, we must be aware that while we may be limited in what we can do, we are not actually prevented from producing the goods.

There are and always will be limits to what we can do as individuals. These limits may be due to personal skills, time constraints, institutional restrictions, etc. Not being able to attend an **ARI** editorial committee meeting does not preclude one from indexing a journal.

There may well be limits to what the Association can achieve. For example, **AULOTS** is by no means exhaustive (eg. only two university libraries contribute) and the journals covered by **ARI** are not all comprehensively indexed.

Nevertheless, the cooperative efforts of members of the Association have produced two publications that are invaluable to the theological community of the region.

Diversity = opportunity

The diversity that can be said to limit the scope for cooperative efforts between theological libraries can equally be said to actually create opportunities for cooperation.

Limited funding for small libraries creates the opportunity for the development of a consortium approach to the purchasing of more expensive resources.

Physical proximity of libraries allows for the possibility of collection rationalisation, resource sharing and joint collection development policies.

Denominational links can create opportunities for cooperative ventures to increase access to services, rationalise resources and broaden collection coverage.

Relationships to other bodies can also create additional forums in which libraries can cooperate - eg. LIAM (Libraries in association with MCD) in Melbourne and the equivalent group of libraries in Sydney.

Libraries can also work together to meet regional needs - eg. the New Zealand Bibliography of Religion and Theology project.

There is a danger when speaking of cooperation between theological libraries of thinking exclusively of formal arrangements. In some ways, formal cooperation is very good because it clarifies the situation by defining purpose, setting limits, documenting procedures, allocating tasks, etc.

Getting a formal agreement worded, documented, reviewed, signed and ratified however, can be a time-consuming process. And once documented, the formal agreement can become restrictive if circumstances warrant an amendment of some part of the wording.over

Informal cooperative ventures and agreements can be just as productive and usually prove to be more flexible and allow us to be responsive to changing circumstance. An informal arrangement can always be formalised if needs be. In our field, it would be a pity if a mutually beneficial cooperative venture did not get under way simply because the documentation hadn't been signed in triplicate.

Critical to any cooperative effort is communication between partners and potential partners. We are fortunate that the structures for effective communication already exist within the Association. The very existence of the Association itself enables the member libraries to act as single body and provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of expertise and resources.

The annual conference, regional chapters, the email forum, newsletter and website are all means by which communication between libraries and librarians is fostered and encouraged.

Cooperation has as much to do with one's attitude as anything else. Within this Association, there is a strong spirit of cooperation that has found expression in many ways over the years.

We may not be ATLA but with that spirit of cooperation, a willingness to encourage one another and a positive attitude that enables us to recognise opportunities for cooperation, we have, do and can continue to work with one another to achieve marvellous things.

Tony McCumstie



Cooperation: III

When the Canberra Committee started planning the program for the 2002 Conference, we quickly recognised that an update on cooperation was warranted, and we agreed that a first step would be to identify cooperative mechanisms already in place. A rough survey was developed.

To identify to whom the survey should be sent, several cooperative tools already in place were used - the printed membership list produced by Helen Greenwood, the ANZTLA email list, the membership list on the ANZTLA website, and as a cross-check, the list of people to whom the Newsletter is posted.

Email was used as the initial means of approaching respondents, and postal inquiry for any where no email address could be located. No reminders were sent.

There were potentially something over 80 Australian and New Zealand respondents. Forty-one completed questionnaires were received, as well as oral communication from a few who chose not to complete the questionnaire - this stunning response

rate given the methodology was very much appreciated.

As we know ANZTLA members are very diverse. Responses were received from members of all sizes and from all the broad categories.

On the whole the information gathered was not surprising. A snapshot of the replies follows.

A database of theological holding in Australia and New Zealand

For many years now it has been acknowledged that for scholars, students and librarians, knowing just where particular titles or collection strengths are located is an elusive but sought goal. For serials in theological libraries, the several editions of *AULOTS* have proved an invaluable tool, but for monographs, contributing to and using the resources of the national bibliographic databases has seemed an obvious approach to solving a complex problem.

Of the forty-one respondents to the survey, only ten contribute to either *Kinetica* (Aust.) or *Te Puna* (N.Z.). This confirms that an enormously wealthy

national resource (the joint collections of theological libraries) is not fully available to scholars or to the ANZTLA members themselves, nor is the wealth of these collections recognised in the wider community.

To date it has not been easy for smaller, and poorer libraries to contribute to Australia's national bibliographic database - Kinetica - but the National Library indicates that it is working towards possible solutions. Having ANZTLA library holdings publicly listed should therefore not be seen as a lost cause, but one towards which ANZTLA members could continue working.

As far as acquisitions is concerned, the survey confirmed that there are only very limited consultative processes between libraries. The recent work of the Sydney College of Divinity Libraries to update its collection development policy, and the processes under way in the Adelaide libraries are most promising.

There are clear benefits to all if unnecessary replication of titles or deficiencies in holdings can be reduced, and the wider possibility - of using our combined resources for planned collection development - is a prospect of great if elusive appeal.

A number of our libraries are **archival** repositories for denominational resources, but there seem to be no joint or shared archival repositories across the libraries. Given the difficulties many much larger libraries have had in getting an arrangement like this to work this is not surprising, and the political implications would, I think, be immense. But in the (very?) long run it may well be something for which we aim.

Library Management System

There is much diversity in the type and sophistication of the Library Management Systems in use. Several libraries (those from Australian Catholic University and Charles Sturt University) are members of an external consortium (UNILINC), a couple of others have arrangements with

University Libraries for their library system; others appear to use a diverse range of software and hardware, and at least one is fully outsourced. We all live in the hope of universal interconnectivity, but at this stage the ANZTLA libraries are a good way from this.

Electronic Resources

The survey confirmed that providing access to the ever-increasing wealth of electronic resources has proved most challenging for ANZTLA libraries, and that the attempts to establish consortial subscriptions have proved laborious and not always able to be sustained.

There are several frank comments on the survey responses about the attitude of vendors to consortial approaches. Renewed attempts for a new consortial subscription to ATLA/ATLAS (*American Theological Library Association/...Serials*) are currently under way.

Borrowing arrangements

Borrowing arrangements relate to individuals (covered by formal or informal reciprocal borrowing arrangements) and also to institutions (covered by inter-library loan protocols).

Although arrangements of either kind provide the capacity for clients of one institution to draw on a wider set of resources than is available in their home library, full reciprocity among libraries is not currently available or indeed sought. Some of the considerations that affect inter borrowing arrangements both personal and institutional include:

- the basic ethos of the library and/or its parent institution towards lending to "outsiders"
- the constraints that institutional structures, policies and politics place on their libraries
- budgetary limitations that limit the capacity of a library to acquire needed items
- scale and history: older libraries often have established and rich over

collections; newer ones have great difficulty providing depth to their collections, even if their current budgets are sound and so their collections may have limited appeal to others than their own clients

- staffing limitations: it costs much staff time to set up and administer either personal borrowing arrangements or interlibrary loans
- actual monetary issues: posting books costs, and so does staff time!!
- geographic considerations: Some theological libraries are geographically isolated, others are in close proximity to one another or to NON-specialist libraries with some theological strengths - in Canberra for instance the theological resources of the National Library of Australia and the Australian National University are considerable

Personal borrowing

All of these considerations have an impact on the capacity and the will of the ANZTLA libraries to establish borrowing agreements or to provide lending access to their collections, and this was evidenced in a number of the responses to the survey's questions about personal borrowing.

In addition to these there is, however, a more complex factor that impacts on reciprocal borrowing: a concern for fair play, institutional responsibility, and equity. This was evidenced in personal comments rather than in the written responses to the survey. The following observations draw on these comments.

As already indicated the strengths of our libraries vary a great deal. All our institutions have, however, a primary responsibility of libraries to meet the basic library needs of our own clientele. The ways in which this responsibility is discharged can vary a great deal: acquisition, electronic access, careful management of the course and operation of the circulation policy to maximise access, and clearly

defined and recognised agreements with another library are all useful tools.

However occasionally things break down: an institution may embark on a new teaching venture without ensuring that the resources needed to support the students have been ensured. Students are infinitely creative and will go in search of resources wherever they can find them and this can lead to justified strains between the libraries involved.

If we as librarians are vigilant and astute in anticipating these issues we can often head off problems before they happen, and if we have worked closely with our colleagues and have clear guidelines or protocols in place, incidental problems can usually be amicably resolved. In the long run, more formal approaches to inter-library borrowing by individuals may be desirable.

The survey demonstrated wide variations across the libraries as to whether or not formal agreements for personal borrowing are currently in place. Libraries associated with one or other of the larger theological consortia (Colleges of Divinity or Theology for instance) are on the whole better equipped to set protocols in place than those that are independent and they have on the whole done this.

Agreements cover most of the state college groupings but there is a good deal of variation as to how they operate (as far as personal borrowing is concerned for instance, Sydney College of Divinity agreements cover students and staff, Melbourne College of Divinity cover staff only). Some lack of clarity about the agreements was also reported among member libraries of these groupings. Some libraries also reported extremely limited use of the reciprocal borrowing facilities.

Libraries may also belong to other consortia that provide interlending arrangements - UNILINC for instance, covers both the ACU and CSU libraries.

The survey also confirmed that apart from libraries with formal borrowing agree-

ments, the extent to which individuals from one library have reading or borrowing access (with or without fees) to another varies a good deal among the ANZTLA libraries and lack of understanding or awareness of just what is available was reported by several of the libraries.

Anyone who has had anything to do with the attempts by University libraries to establish regional or national procedures for borrowing from other libraries will sympathise, but it seems that this is an area where producing and publishing current, clearly available information would be a first step towards clarification.

Interlibrary Loans

There is a good deal of variation about arrangements for ILLs. Formal ANZTLA chapter agreements seem to be fully operational in Queensland and South Australia. Some confusion about arrangements for ANZTLA libraries was reported from elsewhere. Many libraries also have other ILL arrangements in operation. Revisiting ILL arrangements for ANZTLA libraries may well be a good idea at this stage!

ANZTLA as a cooperative tool

The survey did not contain many surprises, but it has become clear that there are areas where clarification and change are possible.

What the survey didn't explore but what I was very conscious of, was the role of ANZTLA itself as both the expression of and tool for building cooperation.

Let me list extremely briefly some of the cooperative aspects of ANZTLA (there are others):

- **Chapter meetings** - exchange of information, professional development, establishment of regional agreements
- **Electronic developments:** both the Website and the email list - a remarkably successful tool - supplement the functions provided by the Chapter meetings, and the email list is also helpful for locating interlibrary loans, publishing information, and some quite

specialised dissemination of information (Denise Cadman's frequent communications about websites of interest). On the website I noted that membership coverage is not perfect - perhaps this is an area for chapters to do a little encouraging.

- **The Conference** - again for exchange of information, professional development, access to suppliers, a bit of fun
- **The National structure** - for coordination, advocacy, consortial arrangements
- **Publications** - notably *ARI*, *AULOTS* and the Newsletter.

That is, there are many tools available for building cooperation.

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Following this part of the session on Cooperation, a workshop discussion of issues associated with cooperation was held. Four groups were formed, and participants were asked to identify cooperative ventures that they considered highly desirable, to prioritise them and to suggest mechanisms for implementation.

As so often, time constraints limited the scope for discussing the various ventures suggested. It was agreed that a consolidated list would be referred to the state chapters for further consideration and possible development.

A range of issues emerged, but many were raised in different forms by more than one group: these are listed first:

- Share information literacy/research methodology expertise
- Develop cooperative purchasing processes including consortial subscriptions to electronic resources
- Explore and establish a consortial approach to contributing to Kinetica
- Rationalise/consolidate serial holdings
- Formalise ILL arrangements within and between chapters, rising to a national ILL scheme
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- Explore strategies for shared professional development through, for instance, regional staff training programs or workshops (listed on the website) covering issues like software, time management, information literacy
- Strengthen and extend the use of the ANZTLA Forum for professional and educative purposes, including reporting on insights gained from conferences, colleagues etc
- Strengthen *ARI*
- Maintain the currency of *AULOTS* via the web
- Explore consortia for library automation software
- Develop and maintain a community borrowers' directory
- Establish a cooperative approach to promoting standards for, eg, salaries and conditions
- Provide support for Asian and Pacific Island libraries through eg "how to" manuals, and standards for setting up libraries

One important consortia issue - the incorporation of ANZTLA - has already been achieved!

Nancy Clarke



The President's Dinner Speech

The President's Dinner Speech is placed here as, it seemed to the Editorial Committee, it relates quite well to the issue of Co-operation.

On talking to the communications lecturer at my place of work about this speech, he suggested that I should start with a joke - one appropriate to the occasion. I told him that I was going to talk about doors, and that I wasn't much good at jokes. A few days later he phoned and told me that he had the perfect library joke for me. He said that it was such a terrible joke that it was bound to amuse.

A Librarian was asleep in bed at 3 am when the telephone rang. A voice at the other end wanted to know when the library opened. The Librarian, quite annoyed at being woken, said grumpily that the library opened at 8.30 am, whereupon the caller said that he had hoped it was sooner. The Librarian wanted to know why anyone would need to get into a library before 8.30 am. The response was "I don't want to get in, I want to get out".

Doors. Why doors? Canberra is a place of significance for ANZTLA. It is our birth place. As you will know, in August 1986, a group of us met as the first Conference of the Association here in Canberra, at St Marks. Some of those inaugural conference people are here tonight. So I thought it might be fitting to reflect on what ANZTLA has given us over these 17 years.

For me personally, and no doubt for all of you, ANZTLA has been a doorway: in particular a doorway to colleagues working in the same specialised areas of librarianship. It has been the doorway to friendships, both within Australia or New Zealand and across the Tasman, stretching also to Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Kiribati, and Vanuatu. It has been a doorway to asking for that tricky interloan request, knowing that the librarian at the other end